

What is claimed is:

1. A nucleic acid sequence which regulates the expression of virulence determinants in gram positive bacteria.
2. The nucleic acid sequence of claim 1, wherein the bacteria is a Staphylococcus species.
3. The nucleic acid sequence of claim 2, wherein the bacterium is Staphylococcus aureus.
4. The nucleic acid sequence of claim 1 comprising the sequence as essentially set forth in SEQ ID NO: 1.
5. A vector comprising the nucleic acid sequence of claim 4.
6. A host cell comprising the vector of claim 5.
7. A method for identifying putative agents which inhibit growth and infectivity of bacteria comprising identifying agents which enhance the expression of the nucleic acid sequence of claim 1 or the activity of a polypeptide encoded thereby.
8. The method of claim 7 wherein the bacterium is Staphylococcus species.
9. The method of claim 8 wherein the bacterium is Staphylococcus aureus.
10. A method of inhibiting growth and infectivity of bacteria comprising contacting the bacteria with an agent which enhances the expression of the nucleic acid sequence of claim 1 or the activity of a polypeptide encoded thereby.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein the bacterium is a *Staphylococcus* species.
12. The method of claim 10 wherein the bacterium is *Staphylococcus aureus*.
13. A pharmaceutical composition for use as an anti-bacterial agent comprising an agent which enhances the expression of the nucleic acid sequence of claim 1 or the activity of a polypeptide encoded thereby and a pharmaceutically acceptable vehicle.
14. The composition of claim 13 which is an anti-bacterial agent against a *Staphylococcus* species.
15. The composition of claim 13 wherein the bacterium is *Staphylococcus aureus*.
16. An isolated polypeptide which regulates the expression of virulence determinants in gram positive bacteria.
17. A polypeptide encoded by the nucleic acid sequence essentially as set forth in SEQ ID NO: 2.
18. The isolated polypeptide of claim 16 wherein the bacterium is *Staphylococcus* species.
19. The isolated polypeptide of claim 18 wherein the bacterium is *Staphylococcus aureus*.
20. A kit for identifying the presence of a *sarR* gene or *sarR* gene product comprising a means for analyzing a biological sample for the presence of the *sarR* gene or the *sarR* gene product.

21. A method of treating a mammal suffering from or susceptible to a gram positive bacterial infection comprising administering a compound capable of selective occupation of a *sarA* promoter receptor.
22. A method of screening for lead compounds which inhibit the expression of virulence determinants in gram positive bacteria comprising identifying chemical entities having structural similarities to the SarR protein sufficient to allow said chemical entities to form heterodimers with SarA protein.
23. A method of screening for lead compounds which inhibit the expression of virulence determinants in gram positive bacteria comprising identifying chemical entities having structural similarities to the SarR protein sufficient to allow said chemical entities to bind *sarA* promoter receptors.
24. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound identified by the screening method of claim 22 or 23.
25. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound identified by the screening method of claim 22 or 23, wherein said composition is capable of inhibiting the expression of *sarA*.
26. A pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of gram positive bacteremia comprising a SarR agonist.
27. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound that binds to the P1 promoter region of a *sarA* gene.